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The Gift of Breastfeeding

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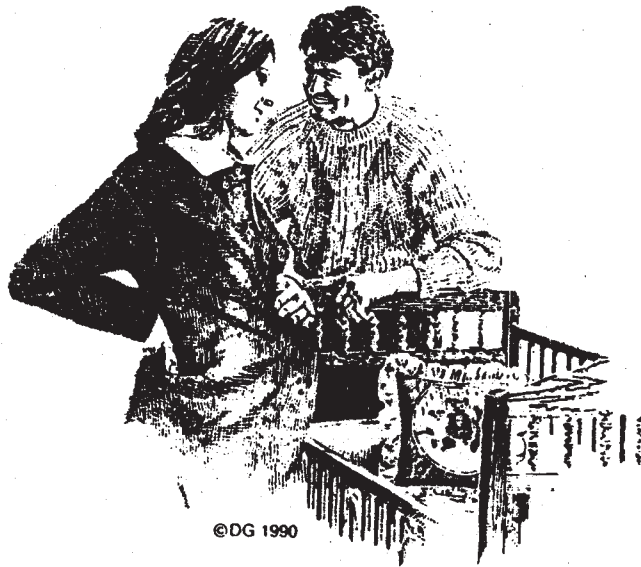


ESS 39

The Gift of Breastfeeding



***Cooperative Extension Service
South Dakota State University
U.S. Department of Agriculture***



Making the choice to breastfeed
is most important.

The benefits are many, but you may
have concerns about breastfeeding.

This pamphlet gives ideas that will help
you make a decision.

Making a Decision

The Perfect Food



The special gift . . .

Mother's milk is the perfect food.

Mother's body is made to nurse, giving a special gift to baby.

Mother's love and milk helps babies grow up healthy and happy.

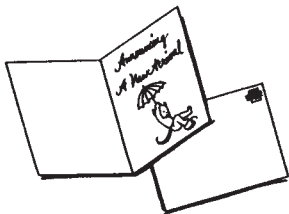
Your breastmilk is special for your baby. It changes daily to meet the needs of your growing baby. The amount of protein, carbohydrates, and fat found in breastmilk provides the perfect nutrition for baby to grow.

The perfect balance of nutrients makes the breastmilk easier for a baby to digest.

Babies breastfed past four months of age have fewer cavities.

Breastfeeding helps promote proper jaw, tooth, and speech development.

Breastfeeding reduces the chances of obesity later in life.



The Perfect Food

A speedy recovery . . .

After the birth of the baby, one of the first changes for the mother is the size of the uterus. Each breastfeeding helps the uterus to return to its normal size.



Each time you breastfeed, your uterus contracts and gets smaller. Breastfeeding also helps to prevent postpartum hemorrhage, a condition that can occur if the uterus doesn't contract properly.

It's also true that breastfeeding helps to reduce the risk of postpartum depression, a condition that can occur in some women after the birth of their baby.

By Dr. William Sears

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has endorsed breastfeeding as the best way to feed your baby.

Learn more about it at www.aap.org

Falling in Love[®] for Mother and Baby



Breastfeeding isn't just your milk.

Breastfeeding contains more than mother's formula. You need breast tissue. Colostrum is only required to start pumped breasts.

Extra costs may be noted, however, in the purchase of rental of a breast pump and extra food for mother.

... and time

Breastfeeding is convenient. You'll spend less time in the kitchen mixing formula, washing and warming bottles.

Breastfeeding is fresh. Its storage is required unless milk is pumped and held at a later time.

And, it's healthy for baby.

Mother's milk provides virtually healthy and baby's perfect body against many diseases.

Breastfed babies have fewer stomach problems, diarrhea or constipation.

Breastfed babies may have less joint pain due to illness.

Breastfeeding Protects Your Baby



Special concerns

Mother's personal privacy

Many styles of clothing allow the mother to breastfeed privately. You may choose to wear a jacket or loose top with front openings or to cover yourself with a blanket.

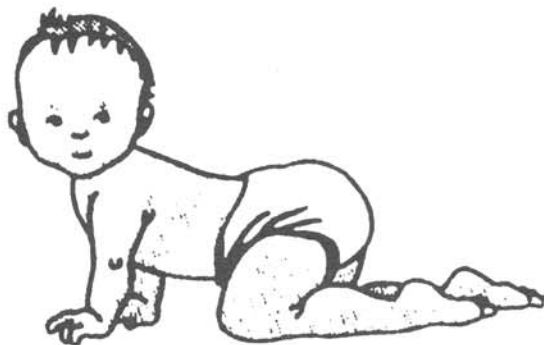
Public areas may have special rooms available for nursing mothers. Arrange your day around your infant's feeding times. Consider taking expressed breastmilk in a bottle.

Breastfeeding requires practice and skill for both mother and baby.

Breastfeeding is important right after delivery to introduce your baby to your breast.

Do not give your baby bottle nipples or pacifiers until your milk supply is in and a good sucking pattern is set. Allow up to four weeks for baby to learn this sucking pattern.

Frequent feedings are needed to insure that the mother's milk supply will increase enough to meet the infant's needs.





Returning to work . . .

It is very possible to combine work and breastfeeding. Before returning to work, talk with your employer and child care provider about your breastfeeding needs.

With a support person to answer questions, mothers find that breastfeeding gets easier and more rewarding.

A nursing mother burns up to 500 calories each day, compared to before pregnancy. She may need these extra calories to maintain a healthy weight.

A major advantage of breastfeeding for mothers is that they feel very special. Breastfeeding is something you will remember for the rest of your life. And, it is a unique and healthy gift given to your baby.





After the Baby Is Born

Expect to breastfeed your baby 8 to 10 times in 24 hours. As the baby grows and is older, the number of breastfeeding times per day will be less. However, the length of a feeding time may increase.

All babies go through growth spurts at six to ten days, three weeks, three months, and four to six months.

During these growth spurts, a baby may be fussy and want to nurse more often. When the baby does nurse more often, the breast milk supply increases and the baby is content.



Special Information

Acknowledgements

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